MEN OF FIRE

J. W. MAHOOD

OTHER BOOKS
BY J. W. MAHOOD

THE ART OF SOUL WINNING.

THE RENAISSANCE OF METHODISM.

MAKE JESUS KING.

MEN OF FIRE

BY

J. W. MAHOOD

"He shall baptize you with the
Holy Ghost, and with fire."

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TO THE PASTORS, THE MEN
OF FIRE, WHOM I HAVE BEEN
PRIVILEGED TO ASSIST IN THE
GREAT WORK OF EVANGEL-
ISM DURING THE YEARS
THIS BOOK IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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FOREWORD

IT is now more than sixty years since William Arthur's Tongue of Fire first stirred the church to its farthest battle line. It would be well could that thrilling message still be read by every minister and Christian worker at least once a year.

But perhaps our greatest need in this new age is for Men of Fire rather than for tongues of fire. For we need fire in the pew as surely as in the pulpit. And, besides, there must be a man of fire before there can be a tongue of fire. The Holy Spirit comes upon the whole man. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The man is more than the sermon. There must be a Spirit-filled man behind every Spirit-filled message.

No one will deny that there needs to come upon all the churches a new and mighty passion for soul-winning. We are not giving this work the important place that our fathers gave it, and that it held in the early Christian Church. Bishop W. F. McDowell in his ex-

cellent book, Good Ministers of Jesus Christ, says, "I think we have ten times as good a theology as our forefathers had, ten times as good an understanding of Jesus and his teaching, ten times as good a theory of social service and human welfare, but nothing like their ardor to bring men to God, to bring men and God together, to restore lost men to God, that made some of our forefathers imperial in their ministry."

Dr. Robert E. Speer talked with a young Chinese Christian who was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the borders of the province of Hunan. He was a college graduate and had come a thousand miles from his home to preach good tidings to his fellow countrymen. After Dr. Speer had questioned him concerning the spirit of the native Christians and the influence of Christianity on the nation, the young man said, "Mr. Speer, you have asked me a great many questions, and some of them have been very difficult. Now, I would like to ask you one question. You know what the Christians in your country are like. Are they all men and women of burning hearts?" And Mr. Speer pertinently asks, "What would you have said to him?"

Yes, what would we have said? Are all our leaders in the pulpit and in the pew men and women of burning hearts? To the man who travels over the country, and studies conditions in the local churches, the fact is evident that many churches are spiritually dead, and that some of them are petted and complimented by dead preachers. We have intellectual preachers and magnetic preachers and strenuous preachers, but how few are the preachers with burning hearts! And what a travesty to see learning and egotism and personal magnetism and bluster substituted for the Holy Spirit's power. We have church officers who are wealthy and diligent in business and zealous for the material interests of the church, but are they men, like Stephen, "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"? We have Sunday school teachers who are socially in the front rank, who, in business and moral living and high ideals, are without fault, but are they men and women "filled with the Spirit"?

It may be true that we have come to a new day, but it is a day of great social and spiritual unrest, and to save the nation and to save the church we must have men and women whose lives have been touched by celestial

flame, who have been baptized "with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Then we shall have tongues of fire and hearts of fire in pulpit and in pew; the church will have a real message of power, and will be equal to the opportunities and problems of this great new age.

J. W. M.

"THE PINES," RAPID CITY, MICHIGAN.

"Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber."

FIRE THE SIGN OF GOD

"FOR in our day also, as in the days of Elijah, fire is the sign of God," says Dr. Hutton, an English writer. Through the ages this has been true—fire is the sign of God. When Moses watched his father-in-law's flocks in the mountains of Horeb, the wild acacia tree flamed, but was not consumed, and a voice commanded him to remove his sandals, for he was on holy ground. "And I beheld," exclaimed the prophet Daniel, "till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Ezekiel too caught a glimpse of his glory and said: "Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the color of amber." And it was Saint John who saw in vision his risen Lord and "his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine

brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." *Yes, fire is the sign of God.*

Now, man was created in the image of God; and when, through the atonement of Jesus Christ, he is restored to fellowship and peace with his Creator, he should be a man of fire. "Be ye therefore perfect," said Jesus, "even as your Father in heaven is perfect." And this perfection of the human should glow and burn with something of the same love and holiness that flames in uncreated Deity. Moses came near to God in the mountain, and when he returned to the people he carried the light and glory of the Infinite Face, and we read, "The children of Israel could not look steadfastly on the face of Moses for the glory of his face."

We need to come near to God to-day that we may catch the glow of the Eternal. The face of God is afar off, and his glory is in eclipse. Many have lost God-consciousness, and so the holy fire. The age to which we have come is electric with great humanitarian

and philanthropic movements. Strange to say, in our zeal to promote these great movements we have lost our vision of God. In his later days Tolstoy said, "The distinctive mark of this age is its lost sense of God." This lost sense of the Eternal is evidenced by our large dependence upon human means and human machinery. Many recent church movements have been chiefly remarkable for the faultlessness of their organization. The machinery has been perfected to a remarkable degree. Indeed, some recent movements have been chiefly characterized by machine methods. Somehow we felt as if the Holy Spirit were not needed. In certain sections of the country it is being said that the churches are so highly organized that the pastor's work becomes a constant grind, and if he does not keep up with the grind he is "blackballed." As the vision of God becomes dim there is always a tendency to depend more and more upon human means. When God comes near to the life the human personality leaps into flame, but there is always an utter dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Said Robert Louis Stevenson—and he was not known as a religious leader—"No man can

truly say that he has made a success of life unless he has written at the top of his life journal, 'Enter God.'" Yet it is the high privilege of every Christian to open his heart's door to God the Holy Spirit. "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" And here is our great need in this new day to which we have come, that God, the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Burning—should be permitted to enter and fill the lives of all disciples of Jesus Christ. Only he can give power for service. Only he can make life worth living. Only he can give perfect trust and confidence. Only he can lead us into a place where, like Raymond Lodge, we can write in the front of our Bibles, "No matter what country I am in, or what conditions surround, I am sure 'the Eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.'" Then the drudgery and irksomeness and dependence upon machine methods will give way to a holy freedom and enthusiasm and victorious joy which will make Christian service a real delight.

Yes, we must come near to God, and let him

fill us with himself. We must regain God-consciousness. Then the whole life will be shot through with holy fire. William Arthur expressed the great truth of this wondrous baptism thus: "When a lecturer on electricity wants to show an example of a human body surcharged with fire he places a person on a stool with glass legs. The glass serves to insulate him from the earth, because it will not conduct the fire—the electric fluid: were it not for this, however much he poured into his frame it would be carried away by the earth; but, when thus isolated from it, he retains all that enters him. You see no fire, you hear no fire; but you are told it is pouring into him. Presently you are challenged to the proof—asked to come near, and hold your hand close to his person; when you do so, a spark of fire shoots out toward you. If thou then wouldst have thy soul surcharged with the fire of God, so that those who come nigh to thee shall feel some mysterious influence proceeding from thee, thou must draw nigh to the source of that fire, to the throne of God and of the Lamb, and shut thyself out from the world—that cold world, which so swiftly steals our fire away. Enter into thy closet

and shut thy door, and there, isolated, 'before the throne,' await the baptism; then the fire shall fill thee, and when thou comest forth, holy power will attend thee, and thou shalt labor, not in thine own strength, but 'with demonstration of the Spirit and with power.' "

Then the human personality will reflect the divine Personality "as the tiny dew drop mirrors the mighty sun." Then God will be real. Then we shall be able to make him real to others, for others will see in us the sign of his Presence. *Yes, fire is the sign of God.*

"O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!

"Refining fire, go through my heart;
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole."

"And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

THE FLAMING FACE

WHEN Bunsen was dying he looked up into the eyes of his wife as she bent over him and said, "In thy face have I seen the Eternal." How marvelous and how true that the human face will come to reflect character! The face is often the perfect mirror of the soul. Some faces reflect the whirlpool of passion or appetite; others reflect storms of jealousy and envy and scorn; others reflect the fields and flowers and sunshine. Some faces are scarred with bitterness and selfishness and love of the world, while others are radiant with love and light and joy.

When God speaks to the soul, or touches the soul with a new ray of heaven's light, it is seen at once in the face. God talked with Moses, and touched his soul with fire; then "the children of Israel could not look steadfastly on the face of Moses for the glory of his face." God comforted Stephen in the midst of his murderers, and the glory of the heavenly Presence shone from Stephen's face, so that "all that

sat in the council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

The holy ones who stand before the throne of the Eternal, and of whom human eyes have now and then caught a glimpse, have always the flaming face. In Ezekiel's wonderful vision of the living creatures "their appearance was like burning coals of fire." And our glorified Lord, when he came back to speak to John in lonely Patmos, came with light supernal in his face, and "his eyes were as a flame of fire." And his presence in the life will make the human face glow with "a light that never was on land or sea."

In Exod. 33. 14, God says to Moses, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." But "my presence" is literally "my face." His presence—his face—will be reflected in our faces, and we too shall have the flaming face.

A Japanese woman appeared at the door of one of our mission schools and asked if they took only pretty girls to be educated. The missionary assured her that they took all who came to them. "But," said the woman, "all your girls seem to be pretty." The missionary

explained that they were taught soul-culture, and that they were Christians. "I do not wish my daughter to become a Christian," said the woman, "but I want to send her to your school to get that look in her face."

"Nothing speaks like the countenance," said Fénelon. A face that has been lightened by the indwelling Spirit will of itself speak heaven's message. What the face of Beatrice did for Dante, or what the face of Pompilia did for Caponsacchi, the flaming countenance of the man or woman who lives the radiant life will do for the multitudes. It will lift them out of the valley of sorrow and discouragement; it will strengthen in the hour of temptation; it will inspire to higher and better Christian living.

Mark Rutherford, in his Miriam's Schooling, tells of an old man who when he was a young man, walking along a London street, met a woman face to face. He did not know her, and neither spoke. He simply glanced into her face and passed on. He never saw her again. Afterward he married, and had children and grandchildren of his own. But that woman's face followed him all through life. A thousand times that look sat in judgment

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upon him, or redeemed him from evil, or rescued him in temptation. Yet he never saw that face but once. When the Holy Spirit has lightened the human face it will reflect the love of Christ, and will be a constant inspiration to those among whom we move to nobler living. By a look we may turn a life toward God, or help some struggling soul on the way to victory—

"As some most pure and noble face,
Seen in the thronged and hurrying street,
Sheds o'er the world a sudden grace,
A flying odor sweet."

When Robert McAll lay dead in Paris, a workman who had been an anarchist stood beside the coffin weeping. Some one asked, "Was he a relative?"

"No."

"Why, then, do you weep?"

"He saved me."

"What did he say to you?" said the questioner.

"Nothing," replied the former anarchist; "it was his face."

It was the Christ-like face of the great missioner that had saved this anarchist.

Mr. S. D. Gordon tells a story of a lawyer,

a scholarly, refined gentleman, who was a confirmed skeptic, and who lectured against Christianity. One evening the officers of the Presbyterian Church were surprised to have this man come and ask to be admitted to church membership. They concealed their astonishment and asked him the usual questions, and so hearty and sincere were his answers that there could be no doubt that he had become a genuine Christian. Then the pastor said, "You must know how astonished we are: would you kindly tell us what has led to this change?"

The lawyer quietly said, "It was Judge Tate's face."

Then the man explained that he had had occasion to consult this eminent Christian jurist in a legal matter, and was struck with something in his face which he could not comprehend. There was "a light, a peace, or an intangible, but very real something—I could not tell just what." He said that he went again and again, ostensibly for legal consultation, but really to study the man's face. And the conviction grew upon him that it was his faith in Christ that so affected the face and made it radiant. The result was that he

became convinced of the truth of Christianity, and accepted Christ.

It is sin that steals the glory from the human face. Unbelief and worldly pleasure disfigure the countenance. The prevailing materialism of the day is hardening the faces of the people. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his smile?—for the smile is the flag of the soul," said Dan Crawford, the great African missionary. In the rush and worry of our modern life the flag is missing on many a face to-day. The presence of Christ in the heart will restore it. He of the flaming face will by his Spirit radiate his glory from our faces if we abide in him. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

FIRE LIGHTED BY PRAYER

THERE is one key that will unlock God's storehouse of holy fire. "Prayer," said Richard Watson, "is the gold key that opens heaven." It has pleased God to make spiritual fire and power subject to release by human supplication. This has been demonstrated a myriad times since that eventful prayer meeting that unloosed the tongues of fire at Pentecost.

Perhaps the greatest power, therefore, that God has committed to men is prayer. The possibilities of a prayer life are unlimited. And the vast resources of the prayer realm are, to the average Christian, undiscovered. Now and again have we seen the mighty influence of prayer when there has flashed across the world's pathways the radiance of a prayer life, like that of George Mueller, of Bristol, or J. Hudson Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, or Hugh Price Hughes, of the London Mission, or David Brainerd, the apostle to the Indians. These men knew how to pre-

vail with God. They knew that there is such a thing as "the assurance of faith."

Marvelous have been the results of prayer through the centuries. Distance seems no obstacle in the way of the prayer of faith. Prayer in some humble home in America has again and again lighted the torch of salvation in distant lands. Bishop Wilson Seeley Lewis, speaking of the great revival at Hinghwa, China, a few years ago, says that the mother of one of the missionaries in Hinghwa wrote her daughter from Houston, Texas, that she was praying for a great revival in Hinghwa. She said: "I spent all night last night in prayer, and to-night at twelve o'clock I received the assurance, and it is so sweet and blessed that I cannot sleep, but am writing you. The revival will have begun before you get this letter." Three weeks afterward, with streaming eyes, the missionaries read the letter, for the revival had begun, and in fifty days one thousand people were converted.

Has the church of to-day lost this key to God's storehouse? Do we no longer believe that God hears and answers prayer? What wonder that there is so little prevailing prayer when so many are seeking to limit the possi-

bilities of intercession to the ordinary working of physical law; and when some men are talking so much about the reflex influence of prayer; and when a professor in a big church university defines prayer as "a conversation both sides of which, structurally considered, are mental states of the one who prays"? Surely, it is time to return to Pentecost, and see how marvelously God opened the windows of heaven and poured the Holy Spirit upon the waiting disciples in answer to prayer, and how, through prayer, the early church grew mightily and prevailed.

Through the centuries, again and again, Pentecost has been repeated by prevailing prayer. Every great spiritual movement through the Christian ages has been begun and carried on by prayer. Mr. Robert P. Wilder, of the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A., says that in 1891 he and a friend were walking through Norway when they applied for lodging one night at a little house in a mountain valley. They soon discovered that their hostess was a woman who knew the secret of a prayer life. From the next stopping place they wrote back saying that they were praying that the Student

Volunteer Movement might be started. Ten years afterward when Mr. Wilder and his wife visited that humble home, this woman brought out the letter that she had received ten years before and said, "I am going to call my husband and children and servants; we want to hear how God has answered our prayer." Then Mr. Wilder related to the household the wonderful movements among the students during the preceding ten years; and he says that that woman in the mountain valley of Norway had more to do with originating the Student Movement in Great Britain than those who went among the universities talking to the students.

Now, the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray. He dwells within us. "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father"; "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Therefore prayer is a supernatural exercise. Henry Drummond tried to have us see the naturalness of the supernatural. We need, rather, to see the supernatural nature of some of the commonest exercises of our holy religion. It has been said by some recent writers that

prayer is natural to the human heart, and that we cannot help praying. In a sense that is true. "Prayer is latent in the life," because we are created in the image of God, but only the Holy Spirit can develop the latent power of prayer. No man can be mighty in prayer who has not received the Holy Spirit into his life. "For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

The answer to prayer may be delayed, but with "the assurance of faith" given by the Spirit we can rest. The answer may not be according to our preconceived plan, or according to our time schedule, but God's promise never fails the obedient soul. Dr. A. T. Pierson talked with George Mueller shortly before his death and asked him whether he had ever presented any petition to God that had not been granted, and Mr. Mueller said that there were two men for whom he had prayed sixty-two years and they were not converted.

"Do you expect God to convert them?" said Dr. Pierson.

"Certainly," said Mueller. "Do you suppose that God would put upon his child for

sixty-two years the burden of two souls if he had no purpose of their salvation? I shall meet them in heaven certainly."

Shortly after Mueller's death Dr. Pierson was preaching in Bristol and he referred to this conversation. As he was leaving the church a lady said, "One of those men was my uncle, and he was converted and died a few weeks ago." The other, a man in Dublin, was also brought to Christ.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

"O thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
The path of prayer thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!"

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

FIRE AND REGENERATION

IN every great world crisis there seems to have come the necessity for a new emphasis upon some fundamental teaching of the Word of God. That has been true from the days of Constantine until now. As we stand on the threshold of what many believe to be a new age in the world's history there has come to many thoughtful men the conviction that we must return to put a new emphasis on the New Testament truth concerning the new birth. This great truth has fallen into eclipse in recent years.

A renewed personality is essential to fellowship with God, and to a life of spiritual victory and usefulness. But our modern emphasis on education and Christian culture and social service has obscured the supernatural work of the Spirit in conversion and regeneration. The result is superficiality in Christian experience. The church would seem to be playing the part of Martha to this generation.

We have so many plans to work, and so many social problems to solve, that we have no time to consider the deeper work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart. We seem to have forgotten that men must be born anew before they can enter the kingdom of God.

It is the fire of the Holy Spirit that warms our sinful nature into new life. A story is told by F. W. Boreham of a party of British sailors who landed on a frozen island in the far north. By accident they set fire to the stunted vegetation, and the flames soon left the island a bare and blackened rock. Some years later another party visited the island and found it covered with a forest of silver birch trees that made the once barren rock "a scene of sylvan loveliness." The fire had warmed and awakened the slumbering life in the seeds which had lain dormant for years in the grip of the arctic cold. The flames had caused the wilderness to blossom as the rose. So does the Holy Spirit first purify and then kindle into flame the human heart. When will we learn that Jesus Christ does not destroy? He converts and transforms. He awakens, perfects, and glorifies.

There is an old fable about a lamp that was

placed in a rude fisherman's hut until its flame changed the coarse wooden planks to silver, and then this noble metal stretched itself out into the accidental forms of pillars and posts and beams, and soon the rude hut became a beautiful temple all glorious within. That is what really happens when the Spirit of God is allowed a place in the human heart. The whole nature is renewed and cleansed and glorified by the heavenly fire.

Some of our statesmen have had much to say recently about a universal brotherhood. That is a splendid ideal. It is the Bible ideal. But we can never have a universal brotherhood until humanity has a new heart. Mr. Balfour, the great British statesman, says that before we can have a changed world we must have a changed heart. He is right. And the only way to reach this ideal is by the Spirit's regeneration of the individual heart.

We are having a revival of Pelagianism these days. The old Bible teaching concerning the depravity of the human heart has been relegated by modern theologians to the dusty tomes of ancient lore, and if the good Bishop of Hippo could rise from his grave he would find ample opportunity to wield his sword in

defense of the truth. "This," said Augustine, "is the hidden dreadful poison that Pelagianism infuses: it would make the grace of Christ consist in his example, and not in his life, saying that men are made righteous by imitating him, not by the power of the Holy Spirit." We no longer believe with Paul that we "were by nature the children of wrath," and the direct result is a weakening of the Bible doctrine of repentance, and the disposition to treat sin as a joke. The denial of the Scripture teaching concerning the fall of man and the inherent depravity of the human heart soon takes all the heinousness out of sin, all the merit out of Calvary, and all the glory out of redemption.

And here is the reason why so little emphasis is placed on conversion to-day. Men would have us believe that we are naturally divine, and that there are some easier ways into the kingdom of God. We need to reread the life stories of the mighty gospel preachers from Paul, the apostle, to Dwight L. Moody. When John Wesley asked his preachers the question, "What can be done in order to revive the work of God?" he answered it himself, saying, "Let every preacher read carefully the

life of David Brainerd." That flaming apostle to the Indians, describing his conversion, wrote in his diary: "Here in a mournful, melancholy state, I was attempting to pray; but found no heart to engage in prayer or any other duty. My former concern . . . was now gone . . . having been endeavoring to pray for near a half hour; then as I was walking in a dark, thick grove, unspeakable glory seemed to open to the view and apprehension of my soul. I do not mean any external brightness, for I saw no such thing; nor do I intend any imagination of a body of light, . . . but it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of God such as I never had before, nor anything which had the least resemblance to it. I stood still, wondered, and admired! I knew that I never had seen before anything comparable to it for excellency and beauty. It was widely different from all the conceptions that ever I had of God or things divine. . . . My soul rejoiced with joy unspeakable to see such a God, such a glorious divine Being."

From that hour David Brainerd sought only the glory of God, and whether it was on a pallet of straw in an Indian wigwam, or in

the home of his friend Jonathan Edwards, one passion consumed him—to see his Indians converted to God.

We need not expect any great nation-wide revival until we begin to preach more as our fathers did concerning the sinfulness of the human heart, the need of repentance, and the absolute necessity for the new birth as a condition of entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The Holy Spirit must come to his own in his renewing and sanctifying grace, and our naturalism and Pelagianism must give way to the supernaturalism of the Spirit in making salvation real through the atoning blood of Calvary.

"Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Let thy bright beams arise;
Dispel the sorrow from our minds,
The darkness from our eyes.

"Convince us of our sin,
Then lead to Jesus' blood,
And to our wondering view reveal
The secret love of God.

"'Tis thine to cleanse the heart,
To sanctify the soul,
To pour fresh life in every part,
And new-create the whole."

"But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."

FIRE IN THE PULPIT

THE one supreme qualification for the Christian ministry is a life that flames with the fires of Pentecost. We have plenty of scholarship in our pulpits to-day, but we are lacking in fire. When Father Taylor heard Emerson preach he said, "It would take as many sermons like that to convert a human soul as it would quarts of milk to make a man drunk." In many a pulpit either learning or eloquence or personal magnetism has been substituted for the Holy Spirit's power, and real spiritual life has completely disappeared. Said Frederic W. Robertson: "When once the idolatry of talent enters the church, then farewell to spirituality. When men ask their teachers, not for that which will make them more humble and godlike, but for the excitement of an intellectual banquet, then farewell to Christian progress." The increasing emphasis by the church upon education during the last quarter of a century has been well, but

the spiritual emphasis has not kept pace with the intellectual. We know the message of heaven better than ever before, but we do not speak it with burning hearts and tongues of fire. The modern sermon too often only scintillates when it should flame and burn.

"Soft words, smooth prophecies are doubtless well;
But to rebuke the age's popular crimes
We need the souls of fire, the hearts of that old time."

Lord Burleigh said of John Knox, "His voice is able in an hour to put more life in us than six hundred trumpets blaring in our ears." But many modern pulpit messages cannot be rightly dignified to comparison with trumpets. A tin whistle would suit the effort better. Too often we find the pulpit in our day quibbling over little things while the great truths of life and destiny wait for proclamation. Many of the controversies that have occupied the front pages of the church press and that have frequently been introduced into the pulpit by men "anxious to keep abreast with the times" have been a travesty on gospel preaching.

A story is told of Lloyd George, the great British statesman, that he was one day riding

with a friend, and he explained to this friend that in his church, the Welsh Baptist, they were having a trying controversy over the translation of a word in the Great Commission. Some thought that it should be rendered, "Baptizing them *in* the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," while others insisted that it should be, "Baptizing them *into* the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." "And," said Lloyd George, "we are having a terrible time. We have become divided into the 'ins' and the 'intos,' and the strife has become so intense that a number of men are willing to die for their convictions. And I am willing to die for my convictions," said Lloyd George, "but for the life of me I cannot remember on which side of the subject I am."

On its editorial page, an influential daily paper recently declared that preaching the Word had now become a business instead of a mission. No statement could describe more truthfully the modern pulpit as a whole. The pastor is no longer a prophet. He is a promoter—a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. He is so busy with the latest drive that he has no time for a revival, no time for ag-

gressive work in soul-winning. And because the voice of the prophet has been stilled, the age has been losing its grip on the supernatural. Sheer naturalism is the only message heard in some pulpits to-day. The pulpit has dropped to the level of the platform. A godly woman said recently: "It is a real treat to hear a gospel sermon once more. We have nothing but lectures in our church now."

And so it has come to pass that many a church is little more than a respectable social club from whose platform is given a little mental or moral stimulus once or twice a week. The Holy Spirit has been crowded out. The candlestick has been removed. The life is gone. Yet the organization persists in calling itself a church. The minister is coddled and petted and complimented. The organization is proud of its beautiful temple, its splendid ritual, its charming music, and its popular preacher. It has invested in Liberty Bonds and supported the Red Cross and contributed to the Y. M. C. A. and the Salvation Army drives, and subscribed to the reconstruction program of the church. But upon its altars the fires of God have died out and nothing is left but the ashes of empty profession.

But here and there are signs of an awakening. There are some pulpits that still flame, and there are some hearts in the pews in which the holy fire still burns, and these are beginning to ask for the "old paths." Here and there consecrated laymen are beginning to say: "We want a preacher, not a promoter or church manager. We want a prophet of God whose lips have been touched with the old-time fire. We want a man with unction as well as intellect, with spiritual power as well as magnetic force." There are many longing hearts in our churches to-day that are waiting to hear a human voice turned into a tongue of flame by the baptism of fire, and praying for a spiritual revival that shall quicken both pulpit and pew into a new life of service and holy daring.

When in later life, burdened by sickness, Spurgeon was anxious to get back into his pulpit he said, "If I ever preach again, I will leave out every bit of flourish, and preach nothing but present truth, hurl it at the people with all my might, live at high pressure, and direct all my energies to the salvation of souls." We need men with such a conviction to-day—men like Jeremiah who can say,

"There is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones"—men like Henry Martyn, who as his soul flamed with one dominant desire, cried, "Now watch me burn out for God."

Some one said that in preaching, the thing of least importance is the sermon. Very little of the average sermon is remembered by the hearers. But there is a subtle influence, a spiritual atmosphere, that flows from every Spirit-filled preacher, that makes his words prophetic, that lifts whole congregations into higher realms of living, and leaves in their lives influences that abide through all the cycles of time. Thirty minutes of such preaching is worth a thousand carefully prepared sermons where the Holy Spirit has no place. The greatest heights of truth and inspiration are not reached by analysis or logic, but only when the human spirit is lifted by the divine Spirit into the realm of the Infinite, and the heart is thus brought so near to God that it can hear the whispers of heavenly wisdom and love. And this is the preaching for which many hearts hunger to-day. They have been starved by essays on philosophy, and philippics on current events, and appeals in behalf of

humanitarian organizations, and now they want the old gospel of a crucified and risen Christ, preached "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." *The pulpit needs men of fire.*

No evil is more marked among the Christian churches of this day . . . than the absence of this Spirit of Burning.

—*Alexander Maclaren.*

FIRE IN THE PEW

THE average church member is not a man of fire. He may be thoughtful and kind; he may be charitable and helpful in many ways; he may be generous and sympathetic toward all good work; but he does not flame. The element most needed in our pews to-day is fire—spiritual fire. In most of our churches we have almost perfect organization, but we are lacking in dynamic power. We have more machinery than we have power to run, and the result is deadness, coldness, formality. Many a church has become a spiritual morgue—dead souls all around. They have interest in worldly pleasure and intellectual gymnastics and musical programs, but no interest in Bible study and prayer and soul-winning. They are interested in all humanitarian and patriotic work, but have no interest in the development of a personal Christian experience.

The glory of Israel, even in her darkest days, was that visible token of the presence of Jehovah—the ark of the covenant. When

that was lost at Ebenezer, all seemed lost. The ancient glory had departed, and the wail of the daughter-in-law of Eli is one of the most pitiable things in all Old Testament narrative. But over the door of too many modern churches might be written the word "Ichabod" —"The glory is departed."

Fire in the pew is just as essential as fire in the pulpit. However zealous and consecrated the ministry may be, if there is not a consecrated and Spirit-filled laity, there will be no great spiritual movement in any church or community. When Peter stood up at Pentecost to preach his first sermon it is not likely that very many people heard his voice. But he was surrounded by a praying, Spirit-filled church that had been in the upper room, and as soon as the sermon was concluded this praying, Spirit-anointed company ran through the streets of Jerusalem repeating the message that Peter had spoken and persuading men to be reconciled to God. These hundred and twenty disciples upon whom had come tongues of fire were just as responsible for the three thousand conversions as was Peter's sermon.

The baptism of fire made soul-winners of every man and woman in the first Christian

Church. Indeed, if after Pentecost there had been found any Christian who was not doing something to introduce others to Christ, the genuineness of that man's Christian experience or that woman's Christian life would have been seriously doubted. The baptism of fire always makes witnesses for Christ. In Korea to-day the standard of a man's Christian life is measured by his success in bringing others to Christ.

1. *This baptism will give joy in soul-winning.* When the Holy Spirit fills the life he floods the heart with God's love. "The love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given to you." And this love—God's love—will constrain us to win others to Christ. "The love of Christ constraineth us," said the apostle Paul. Impelled by the same love that brought Christ from his Father's throne to redeem the world we will want to rescue men and women from the death eternal. We will rejoice that we are called to the highest service in God's universe—to save a soul from death. At the close of a series of special meetings a young lady said to me, "Had somebody said to me two weeks ago that I would ever speak to anyone about be-

coming a Christian, I would have thought him foolish. But I have come to have a real joy in winning others to Christ." To my personal knowledge that young woman had brought at least a dozen of her young friends to Christ during the ten days preceding, and she was the happiest person in the community. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

2. *This baptism consumes fear.* The early disciples waxed bold in giving testimony. There were doubtless many timid souls among them, but the indwelling Spirit made them "strong and very courageous." They no longer feared the face of man, for now they were subject to a higher power. Over the grave of Sir Henry Havelock you may read these words, "He feared men so little because he feared God so much." The layman Stephen became so filled with the Holy Spirit that his opponents were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Yet he was only a deacon in the church, with no ordination and no special training for the work of witnessing. When every pastor is surrounded by a company of praying, Spirit-filled disciples,

then it will be easy to preach the message of salvation and invite men and women to make the great decision.

But this baptism does not make us self-reliant nor vainglorious. It gives humility and utter dependence upon the Holy Spirit. "They spake the word of God with boldness," but that boldness was always subject to the mind of Christ, and was characterized by a spirit of genuine humility. With Peter and John they could all say, "We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard."

3. *This baptism destroys wavering and instability.* These early disciples "continued steadfastly" or "with steady persistence in the apostles' teaching." One of the most discouraging situations in which any pastor can find himself is to be surrounded by a lot of church members who are utterly unstable. One day they give evidence of special devotion to the work of the Kingdom, and the next day they commit some act, or are guilty of some neglect, that shows utter disregard for the most solemn vows and the most reverent consecration. Sometimes they are on the mountain of Christian experience and sometimes in the bog—mostly in the bog. They will

pledge fidelity to some good cause and in a few days seem to forget all about it, and turn their attention to some new thing. Such people are always a hindrance to the work of the church, and there are all too many of them in most churches. Only the holy fire of Pentecost will transform and give stability to these wavering, inconstant souls, and make them a mighty force for righteousness.

There is a story of a pastor who had a dream in which he thought an angel came and showed him his church record. Opposite each name was a plus sign or a minus sign, indicating that there were some who added to the strength of the church while others subtracted from it. A personal Pentecost will always put a plus sign opposite our name on the church register, and life will really count for something from the spiritual standpoint.

This, then, is our great need in all the churches to-day: Spirit-filled men in the pulpit; Spirit-filled men and women in the choir; Spirit-filled men and women in the Sunday school; Spirit-filled men and women in official meetings, in the young people's society, and in every department of the church's activities. Then the days of the Spirit's mighty working

will return, and "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.

"Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these earthly toys;
Our souls, how heavily they go,
To reach eternal joys.

"In vain we tune our formal songs,
In vain we strive to rise;
Hosannas languish on our tongues,
And our devotion dies.

"And shall we then forever live
At this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to thee,
And thine to us so great!

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all thy quickening powers;
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours."

"Wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them."

THE MESSAGE OF FIRE

THE Word of God is the message of fire. "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord?" When there is fire in the pulpit and fire in the pew, the Word of God will come with power. A Christian minister has one supreme message. When anything else, however good, crowds out the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is grieved. For it is his prerogative to give power with the preaching of the gospel. In these days there is danger that the pulpit shall proclaim everything but the gospel message. Indeed, it begins to look as if we would have to add some more Sundays to the calendar if pastors are able to present all the special interests that they are asked to preach about. We have Children's Day, and Veterans' Day, and Hospital Day, and Temperance Day, and Armenian Day, and Soldiers' Day, and Law Enforcement Day, and Mother's Day, and Home Coming Day, and who knows how many more? Now some one wants a Sunday set apart as Babies' Day.

Some pastors are beginning to ask when they are expected to preach the gospel. To be sure, the church must be interested in all humanitarian and social problems, but when these things monopolize the hours of holy worship and the time that should be given to the proclamation of the great truths of revelation, no wonder many churches are only half filled, and the multitudes starve spiritually.

The Word of God will have the supreme place in every message of fire. We need to give heed to-day to Paul's exhortation, "Preach the word." Mrs. Edith Fox Norton, writing from stricken Belgium during the World War, said: "We have never before realized the power of the Word of God to save human lives as we have since we were given our ministry to the soldiers of the Belgian army. One example: a soldier, Jacques B., was sitting in a trench which bore the name 'Le boyau de la mort.' This name signifies 'The bowels of death,' and it was a death trap, for at just a little distance lay the German trench, across a narrow river, and it was on higher ground than our own trench. A heavy bombardment was on. They were expecting death at any moment, and he found a little book lying close to him. He

took it and began reading it, and found it to be the Gospel of Saint John. It recalled to him a period in his life when he attended a Protestant service in Brussels. He read and read, and at last the word was sent home that the Spirit had done its work, and Jacques had accepted the Saviour. He wrote his name on the back cover at the end of the decision form, tore it off, and, at the end of the bombardment, sent it to us in London. Afterward we met him and were surprised at the great change in his countenance."

The true prophet of God speaks his Master's message, and that message is found in the inspired Scriptures. It may have different notes and may touch human life from many different angles, but preached by a man of fire, will always be mightily effective. Paxton Hood used to say that good preaching had always "hooking or hitting power." He illustrated the first by the story of a minister who occupied a pulpit at Inverness, Scotland, on a Sabbath when the regular pastor was absent. "How did you like him?" asked one Scotchman of another. "Weel," said the other, "he carries a braw rod, and a bonny long line, but eh! mon, there is neither hook nor bait at the

end of it." The message of fire will always have either "a hooking power or a hitting power."

The men whose words have lighted the multitudes in every age have always been men who have emphasized some great cardinal teaching of the Bible. Peter emphasized repentance. So did John Knox and John Wesley. Paul emphasized faith and grace. So did Martin Luther. John emphasized love. So did Moody. There are some great cardinal truths of the Word that need new emphasis in the Christian pulpit as we stand on the threshold of an age of reconstruction.

1. *We need a new emphasis on the awfulness of sin.* We need a great soul-convicting revival. The growing laxity of conscience concerning the enormity of sin against God is startling. William E. Gladstone said, "The decay of the sense of sin against God is one of the most serious portents of these days." "Fools make a mock of sin," says the Word, that is "treat sin lightly," or "joke with sin." Here is the reason for the world tragedy through which we have just passed. For fifty years the German people have been inoculated with a philosophy that treated sin

lightly. Nietzsche and Hegel and Treitschke all put the state above morality. "Christian morality," said Nietzsche, "is the most malignant of all falsehoods." Treitschke taught that rulers may sin wantonly if in the interests of the state. That philosophy, born in hell, and promulgated by Bernhardi and Nietzsche and Treitschke and the Hohenzollerns and the Von Hindenburgs, debauched and brutalized a great people until they were guilty of the greatest atrocities ever charged against a civilized nation. When sin is made a joke it will debauch and curse the nation. And what it does for the nation it will do for the individual. Every pulpit and every Sunday school class and every young people's society should sound the alarm concerning the awfulness of sin. It is the one thing in all God's universe that He hates. He says of it, "That abominable thing that I hate."

2. *We need a new emphasis on the merit and power of the atoning blood of Christ.* In recent years the tendency has been to make the cross of Christ of none effect. And this in spite of the fact that the history of the Christian Church will bear witness that whenever Christ has been preached in the fullness

of his priestly office as sin's atonement, the church has always gone forward with victorious strides. But whenever the testimony to his redemptive work has been weak and faltering there have come spiritual barrenness and apostasy. A certain minister declared that there was one hymn he never asked his congregation to sing, and that was "There is a fountain filled with blood." He said, "That hymn does not fit into the æsthetic ideas of my people." God pity the man who pretends to be called to preach the gospel of the Son of God who leaves out the very heart of the gospel. Every true ambassador of Christ will surely find his heart singing,

"Dear dying Lamb! thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Are saved to sin no more."

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

FIRE AND AUTHORITY

IT was said of Benjamin Disraeli that, in spite of his remarkable career as a statesman, he lacked two qualities necessary to the highest leadership. He was never quite in earnest, and he did not impress one as having a dominating conviction. Charles Kingsley said, "I am more and more powerfully awake to the fact that the curse of our generation is that so few of us deeply believe anything." A dominating conviction is always necessary to real leadership in any realm of life, for a true leader must have authority, and conviction is necessary to authority. It is said of the Master that "He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But the word authority is *εξουσίαν* which indicates an inward source. The fire of the Spirit burned within, and therefore he spake as never man spake. After Pentecost it is said of the apostles that they spake with "a holy boldness," and "with great power" they gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. There will be no

note of authority in the message that is not backed up by a great conviction. If there has been any weakening of faith in the great fundamental teachings of the Word of God, the note of authority will be missing from the preacher's message.

Speaking of Carlyle, Chesterton said: "There are two main moral necessities for the work of a great man: (1) that he should believe the truth of his message, and (2) that he should believe in the acceptability of his message." Perhaps the weakest place in our modern preaching and Sunday school teaching and in all our Christian work is the lack of a great conviction. We are not dead sure of the truths we preach and teach, and therefore the note of authority is missing.

A United States senator, in an article in the Saturday Evening Post a few years ago, told of a gentleman with good opportunity for investigation who asked every young preacher whom he met during the summer vacation three questions: 1. Do you believe in God the Father; God a Person; God a definite intelligence—not a congeries of laws floating like a fog through the universe; but God a Person in whose image you were made? 2. Do you

believe in Christ as the living Son of God, dying on the cross for our sins, and raised from the dead? 3. Do you believe that when you die you will live again as a conscious intelligence, knowing who you are and who other people are? There was not a single unequivocal, earnest "yes" by any man to any of these questions. They all wanted to explain what was the latest thought upon the subject, and to declare that there were some stubborn objections. Now I do not know with whom this gentleman conversed, but he said that all these ministers to whom he proposed these questions admitted "that they had noticed an absence of real influence upon the hearts of their hearers, and thought that this same condition is spreading throughout the modern pulpit." It seemed not to have dawned upon them that the trouble was with themselves. The loss of a great conviction from their lives has stilled the note of authority in their messages.

Only a personal Pentecost will restore this note of authority, for when the Holy Spirit fills the life he will bear witness to the truth. "He shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you," said Jesus. Then we shall "speak

the word of God with boldness." Then there will be blood-red earnestness behind every message. "Every bullet will hit the mark," said Emerson, "if it is dipped in the marksman's blood." The Holy Spirit, infilling the life, will make the great truths of revelation so real to us that they will become a part of us; and truths that have been "dipped in our own blood" will surely reach and stir the hearts of those who hear.

The Old Testament prophets were men of fire. Therefore they spake with authority. There was a "Thus saith the Lord" behind every message. They did not hesitate to say, "Thou art the man." Dr. Forsyth says that in the old days the prophets were perfectly certain of their position as they said, "Here am I," while to-day in our haze and lack of certitude we say, "Where am I?" The dynamic of authority is in the truth of God, and if the preacher's confidence in the Word be shaken, then the prophet will become a mere rhapsodist or dreamer. The old Cardinal, in The Master Christian, said, "We only offer vague hopes and dubious promises to those who thirst for living waters of salvation and immortality. It is as if we did not feel sure

enough of God ourselves to make others sure." The man who is sure of his message and sure of his commission will speak with confidence and power. And the Holy Spirit alone can give to the heart and life this mighty certitude. The baptism of fire will transform us from manikins into spiritual giants, from echoes into thunderbolts, and from mere men pleasers into true prophets of God.

"Holy Spirit, Truth Divine!
Dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God, and inward light,
Wake my spirit, clear my sight.

"Holy Spirit, Power Divine!
Fill and nerve this will of mine;
By thee may I strongly live,
Bravely bear, and nobly strive!"

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

FIRE AND SPIRITUAL REALITY

PROFESSOR HIBBARD, of Wesleyan University, used to say to his students, "You cannot give a clear expression unless you have a clear impression." We cannot make spiritual things real to others unless they are very real to us. And only the Holy Spirit can make real to us the great truths of the spiritual life. The greatest need among Christians to-day is a clear consciousness of the reality of the spiritual realm. The tendency of the age has been so materialistic and utilitarian that spiritual vision has grown dim. Emerson said, "The true meaning of spiritual is real." We have a great multitude of professing Christians to-day to whom spiritual things are mere shadows, and Christ a mere phantom. The most real things in the lives of the early Christians were the atoning blood of Christ, and His resurrection power. But these great realities made real the whole spiritual realm.

The man of fire knows the reality of the

spiritual universe. To him there are no dead worlds. All creation teems with glorious life. Every radiant world gleams with the majesty of a Creator's power, and every created, redeemed, and glorified soul lives because God lives.

"And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless universe
Is life—there are no dead."

The man of fire knows the reality of *The New Birth.* He has passed from death to life. Old things are done away; all things have become new. His spiritual eyes have been opened. With the average church member there is too much haziness and uncertainty about the Spirit's work in his life. He hopes he is a Christian, or he hopes he is saved. There is not the ring of spiritual victory in his testimony. He cannot say, like Paul, "I know whom I have believed." But the man whose heart and life have been touched with the fires of Pentecost knows, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Then too he has the birth marks. Here are some of them: "We know that we have passed from death into life, be-

cause we love the brethren"; "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world"; "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not"; "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Of course he knows the reality of the new birth.

The man of fire knows *the authority and certainty of the inspired Word.* There was no apology for truth as Peter with ringing voice exclaimed, "Be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words." Then he proceeded to quote the Old Testament prophecy relating to the outpouring of the Spirit, and the words of David concerning Christ, and declared that this was the day of fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies. He preached the truth with power, because he believed the truth. Let it be said again—the dynamic of authority lies in the Word of God. The Word is the sword of the Spirit. Any weakening of confidence in the authority of the Scriptures means a corresponding weakening of spiritual power. To the man whose heart has been touched with Pentecostal flame the Bible is the very Word of God, and "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable

for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

There is so much shallowness in modern Christian experience that many church members have no spiritual influence or power. The world can see that there is no reality in their profession. This statement sometimes applies to the pulpit as well as to the pew. Men are living far beneath their best. Owen Wister, in The Virginian, makes his hero to say, "But I'll tell yu this: a middlin' doctor is a pore thing, and a middlin' lawyer is a pore thing, but keep me from the middlin' man of God." The man who has not come to see the splendid reality of the spiritual realm can never be more than a "middlin'" Christian; and thus all the great possibilities for usefulness and holy living are wasted.

But there are many whose souls are tired of this shallowness, and who are hungry for reality. They are tired of living on husks, and tired of the ceaseless babble of tongues raving about a new age, and a new theology, and New Thought, and "no sin," and they want to get back to the great certainties of the New Testa-

ment. And the Holy Spirit will light the way back to spiritual reality. His baptism makes the death of Christ real, and his regenerating grace real, and his resurrection power real. "Know ye not," says the apostle, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The man who has received this wondrous baptism has died, and has been made alive again. If anything in the world is *real,* surely it is the fact of death and life. Charles Wesley had come into the realm of spiritual reality, and he sang,

> "Faith lends its realizing light;
> The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
> The Invisible appears in sight,
> And God is seen by mortal eye."

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. . . . Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

FIRE AND POWER

THE church of to-day is up to date. She has wealth and scholarship and numbers and beautiful temples and fine music. She has organization that is almost perfect. Her material and educational resources were never so great. But she lacks one supreme thing, and that is power. The church has so much promoting to do, so much machinery to keep in order, and so much reputation to conserve that she has little time left to seek the fountains of spiritual power. The risen Lord said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And this promise was wonderfully fulfilled, for after Pentecost it is said: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." "And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." And Stephen was a layman.

Could he have his way, the Holy Spirit would release both in pulpit and in pew to-day resources of strength and power of which we have never been conscious. Dr. H. C. G. Moule, in Veni Creator Spiritus, says of the reception of the Spirit in his own life: "It was a new contact as it were with the inner and eternal movements of redeeming goodness and power, a new discovery in divine resources."

We must be careful, however, to distinguish between the real and the unreal here. There has been so much cheap imitation of real spiritual power that many good people have become utterly prejudiced against any mention of the subject. Some have much to say about what they call "the power," and are bluntly critical and supercilious toward anyone who does not adopt their particular shibboleth. But there is no boastfulness or bombast or swagger about the man who has had a genuine New Testament Pentecost. He will have little or nothing to say about his own spiritual graces and achievements. His boasting will be of the wonderful Christ who has saved him; and the meekness and gentleness and humility of the New Testament ideal will be seen in the real man of fire. Bishop Thoburn used to say:

"Vociferous prayer and stormy preaching may become the habits of a good man, but are by no means an evidence of spiritual power."

The baptism of fire will give power to conquer self. No man can conquer his evil heart without the help of the Holy Spirit. Paul was crucified to self. He had conquered self. The Spirit had been his teacher. He "walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "The law of the Spirit of life" had made him "free from the law of sin and death."

The experience of many professing Christians to-day is described by the line in Theodore Monod's beautiful hymn, "Some of self and some of thee." But the self life must go. The Holy Spirit does not destroy personality. He takes his place in the personality, and then we live the Christ life. Then we can say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ becomes the center, then everything is adjusted to his will. When we die to self, then we are not so anxious about our own reputation as we are about Christ's glory. Above everything else we desire the coming of his kingdom.

Then, too, we are not so anxious about place and position as we are to fit into Christ's plan for our lives. And all this means that envy

and jealousy of the success of others will have to go. When Israel stood before Jericho Joshua was the leader of the host. When he was considering a plan of campaign a Man with a drawn sword appeared. Joshua said, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?" Joshua was superseded. He must fit into God's plan. So must we if the walls of these modern Jerichos fall. Christ must be all. The Holy Spirit will give power to conquer self and enthrone Christ.

The baptism of fire will give power to seek and to love the outcast. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for the *lost.* Jesus declared that he came "to seek and to save that which was lost." The church that is not carrying out the Master's mission is surely not the church of Jesus Christ. The heart that has not been touched by the Spirit of Burning will likely despise the outcast. Until the Holy Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts there will be little interest in seeking the lost. When one of our missionaries and his young

wife arrived in India they found conditions so different from what they had expected that they became utterly discouraged. They had always had good homes, had just been graduated from college, and now found themselves in the midst of a lot of dirty, ignorant, lazy natives. The situation was revolting. They talked it over and considered returning to America. They said, "We cannot love these filthy people." Finally they decided to take the whole matter to the Lord in prayer. They told him that he had sent them to India, and now they found that they did not love the people, and that he would have to give them love, or they must return home. While they were praying the Holy Spirit came upon them, and the love of God flooded their hearts. Now nothing but death could keep them out of India. They saw in every dirty, ignorant native an immortal soul for whom Christ died.

The baptism of fire will give power to win men and women to Christ. During the last few years the work of soul-winning has become increasingly difficult. The methods that have been most effective in the past seem to fail. Perhaps that is because we have been depending on the human means. We have

been relying too much on big tabernacles, and big choirs, and thorough advertising, and sensational methods, and too little on prayer and faith and on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We need to recall the words of the great soul-winner Paul, who said, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . . For when I am weak, then am I strong." Christ is sufficient for all our impotence and all our timidity; and the Holy Spirit is mightier than all our human machinery.

"Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew;
That I may love what thou dost love,
And do what thou wouldst do.

"Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine,
Till all this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine."

A PRAYER

O Holy Jesus, King of the saints, . . . preserve thy spouse whom thou hast purchased with thy right hand, and redeemed and cleansed with thy blood. O preserve her safe from schism, heresy, and sacrilege. Unite all her members with the bands of faith, hope, and charity, and an external communion when it shall seem good in thine eyes. Let the daily sacrifice of prayer and sacramental thanksgiving never cease, but be forever presented to thee, and forever united to the intercession of her dearest Lord, and forever prevail for the obtaining for each of its members grace and blessing, pardon and salvation.—*Jeremy Taylor, in Holy Living.*

THE HEART OF FIRE

THE sublimest work on earth is to influence immortal souls toward God. This cannot be done effectively without a heart of fire. Cold religion is a misnomer. "For a Christian to be cold is sin." The nearer we come to God the warmer the heart. When we walk with him the heart will flame with a passion to win others to him. "There is no ice in his presence," says one. Yet we have to-day a type of Christian profession that is chiefly remarkable for intellectual conceit and frozen dignity. It chills rather than warms; it repulses rather than attracts. In Isaiah's wonderful vision those who stood nearest the throne were the seraphim—the flaming ones. And these burning creatures folded their pinions over their eyes to shade them from the pure white flame of the infinite majesty of God, while they cried: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty." We need to come near to the throne. Many of us stand so far off that there are frost crystals on our eye-

brows. Living in the dimness of a mere shallow profession it is easy to have the complacency of self-satisfaction and the cold and shriveled soul of an utterly selfish life. Then there will be no effort to win others to Christ. William Arthur's vivid illustration of the spiritual effects of the baptism of fire is one of the most striking things in his immortal book:

"A piece of iron is dark and cold; imbued with a certain degree of heat, it becomes almost burning without any change of appearance; imbued with a still greater degree, its very appearance changes to solid fire, and it sets fire to whatever it touches. A piece of water without heat is solid and brittle; gently warmed, it flows; further heated, it mounts to the sky. An organ filled with the ordinary degree of air which exists everywhere is dumb; the touch of the player can elicit but the clicking of the keys. Throw in, not another air, but an unsteady current of the same air, and sweet but imperfect and uncertain notes respond to the touch; increase the current to a full supply, and every pipe swells with music. Such is the soul without the Holy Spirit; such the changes that pass upon it when it receives

the Holy Spirit, and such its action when it is endued with the *power of the Holy Spirit.*"

Now, there are three ways in which the heart of fire is cooled:

1. *By putting the emphasis on education to the neglect of the spiritual life.* This is the tragedy that is occurring in many of our schools of higher learning to-day. The students' time is so filled with other things that there is little or no room for spiritual culture. We must have so much time for mental and recreational development, and for the demands of the social life, that there is little left for spiritual development. And yet what shall it profit if our sons and daughters acquire all the mental and social culture of the schools and in the end become infidels, apostates, criminals, or worldlings? From a Christian standpoint is not the spiritual all important? Dr. Samuel Chadwick, the great British Wesleyan minister, says, "Fire is mightier than learning. A soul ablaze is a better guide to effective speech than much scholarship. It is fire that conquers the heart, and this fire still falls from heaven." We need a mighty new movement in our church schools which, while loyal to the highest educational ideals, will

put strong emphasis on the spiritual and keep it there. We need men and women on the faculties of our educational institutions whose training in spiritual things is just as thorough as their training in the arts and sciences and languages—men and women with burning hearts to lead our young people in the way of a genuine Christian experience.

2. *The heart of fire is cooled by prejudice.* There is nothing more chilling to the spiritual nature than prejudice. We see its effects in the lives of those who have become prejudiced against the teaching concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, or concerning the New Testament teaching of our Lord's second coming, or toward revivals, or toward people whose skin happens to be of a different color from our own. Prejudice will introduce coldness and bitterness into our hearts toward any who do not accept our interpretation of certain parts of the Scripture. How pitiful the coolness that for a time arose between those two great ambassadors of Christ, John Wesley and George Whitefield. But toward the end of Whitefield's life prejudice faded and the old-time affection asserted itself.

The Holy Spirit cannot dwell in his fullness

in the heart where prejudice is given room. It is his to lead us "into all truth." And he knows that prejudice will discolor and distort truth. Mr. S. D. Gordon tells of a gentleman who was asked by an artist friend to come to his home and see a painting he had just finished. At the time appointed he went and was shown by the attendant into a dark room and left there. "He was much surprised, but quietly waited developments. After fifteen minutes his friend came into the room with a cordial greeting, and took him up to the studio to see the painting which was greatly admired. Before he left the artist said, laughingly, 'I suppose you thought it queer to be left in that dark room so long?' 'Yes,' the visitor said, 'I did.' 'Well,' his friend replied, 'I knew that if you came into my studio with the glare of the street in your eyes you could not appreciate the fine coloring of the picture. So I left you in the dark room till the glare had worn out of your eyes.' " With the glare of prejudice in our eyes we cannot see spiritual truths as the Holy Spirit wants us to see them.

3. *The heart of fire is cooled by spiritual pride.* Nothing is more quickly fatal to the spiritual life than a swollen self. And the

most subtle form of spiritual pride is a self-conscious humility. Alexander Maclaren says that "whenever a man begins to suspect that he is good he begins to be bad; and every virtue and beauty of character is robbed of some portion of its attractive fairness when the man who bears it knows, or fancies that he knows, it. . . . You may be sure that the more a man is like Christ the less he knows it; and the better he is the less he suspects it."

When the holy fire has been kindled in the heart all pride will be consumed, and "the beauty of the Lord our God will be upon us."

"Oh thou, who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart!

"There let it for thy glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble love and fervent praise.

"Jesus, confirm my heart's desire,
To work, and speak, and think, for thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up thy gift in me;

"Ready for all thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete."

"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

"Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress."

FIRE LIGHTED BY SORROW

A DISTINGUISHED Scotch theological professor, whose name is known far and wide, a sincere student of the Bible, but whose modern views of the Old Testament have sometimes been far removed from the traditional faith of the Christian Church, lecturing at Yale some years ago, declared that the conflict between traditionalism and criticism was finished, and that criticism had won. But now, after his four sons had gone over the top and only one had come back alive, this eminent professor says: "I have gone back to the faith of my covenanting father, back to the Bible of the prophets, who experienced and wrote it out in times like this, back to the faith of that God who died for me on Calvary." How often there has been kindled in the valley of sorrow a fire that has caused the life to burn with a new faith and enthusiasm, and has lighted us back into the "old paths"!

In the city of Philadelphia, a little woman,

whose face bore evidence that she had been through the furnace of affliction, told me that in her early life she was an earnest Christian; but after her marriage she drifted into the so-called society life, and soon lost all spiritual light and joy. Afterward she became a confirmed skeptic, and even refused a minister entrance to her home. Then a great sorrow came into her life, and through that sorrow she came back to God. The fires of grace and spiritual power were lighted anew. I knew her to be one of the most useful and Christ-like spirits in all that section of the city where she lived. Yes, through sorrow, the Holy Spirit gains access to the heart, and kindles again the fires of loving service.

A story is told of a musician who called at the shop of a noted violin maker and ordered the best instrument he could make. When the violin was finished the musician came to test it. He drew the bow across the strings, and a look of anger clouded his face. He raised the instrument and struck it on the table, breaking it into a hundred pieces. Then he paid the price he had agreed to pay, and left the shop. With infinite patience the violin maker gathered up the broken bits and fitted

them together, and soon the instrument was remade. The musician was sent for again, and he came. He drew the bow across the strings and his face brightened. The violin was perfect. He asked the price. "Nothing," replied the maker. "That is the same instrument you broke in pieces. I put it together again." And sometimes God cannot get our attention until he breaks the life in pieces. There is no music, no spiritual fire, no likeness to Christ. Then he permits sorrow to overwhelm us, and through sorrow we come to know and do the perfect will of God.

God is not the author of sorrow. As long as sin and Satan are in the world we shall have tears and anguish and disappointment, but sometimes God permits sorrow that he may kindle the lamps of prayer and faith and testimony in the life.

In her early years Madame Guyon was a vain, thoughtless society butterfly, worshiping her own beauty. But she was stricken with smallpox, which destroyed her idol. In her distress she turned to God, and thus through this affliction she became one of the greatest Christian leaders of all the centuries.

There are in almost every life possibilities

for holy living and usefulness which have never been brought out. And God knows that if he could only fill the life with his Holy Spirit, it would flame with zeal and faith and spiritual beauty. No wonder then that he sometimes permits us to walk through the furnace of affliction if he can in this way turn us from our selfish pride and from our indifference to seek the higher way that leads to Christ and heaven.

"Out of the depths to thee I cry,
Whose fainting footsteps trod
The paths for our humanity,
Incarnate Son of God!

"Thou Man of grief who once apart
Didst all our sorrows bear—
The trembling hand, the fainting heart,
The agony and prayer!

"Let faith transcend the passing hour,
The transient pain and strife,
Upraised by an immortal power—
The power of endless life."

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

FIRE AND CHRISTIAN UNITY

HOW beautiful the spirit of unity in the early church! "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people." The Pentecostal flame had fused all hearts into a holy fellowship. On a banner over the entrance to the tabernacle at the Keswick Bible Conference I read, "All One in Christ." There the atoning and saving power of Calvary was emphasized in almost every service, and there the glory and sweetness of Christian unity was evidenced as I had seldom known it before. All evangelical churches were represented; all conditions and types of men were there. But the spirit of unity was delightful. Before the fire of the Holy Spirit prejudice and bigotry and denominational jealousy had all melted away.

There can be no enduring Christian unity that is not born at Pentecost. There can be no enduring world peace that is not cemented

with the Spirit of Pentecost. There can be no lasting interdenominational fellowship that is not begotten of the Holy Spirit.

The prevalence of so much denominational bigotry and narrowness in some communities brings derision from the world. What a pitiable sight to see eight or ten little struggling churches, torn by jealousies, in a community where two or three churches would be amply sufficient for all the people; and how pitiable to find people professing to be followers of Jesus Christ who can see no good in any denomination but their own. The Congregationalist tells a story of a missionary on furlough who was being entertained in the home of an old lady.

"Just think," exclaimed the guest, "in Korea the Presbyterians and Methodists have divided the entire territory between them! Four hundred Methodist churches in Presbyterian territory were told to enroll themselves as Presbyterian, and did so without a murmur."

"Isn't that wonderful! Isn't that splendid!" breathed the old lady.

"And four hundred Presbyterian churches were directed to become Methodist," continued the speaker.

And the old lady mournfully said: "O, how *could* they?"

The time has come when Protestant Christianity must present a united front to the powers of darkness. The doors of all the nations are wide open to the missionary of the cross. There never was a day of such opportunity to reach the last man and woman with the gospel message as now; and this can be done if only Protestantism will move like an army rather than like a mob. If only the Master's prayer, "That they all may be one," were answered, the world might be evangelized in this generation.

This does not necessarily mean organic union, although there are churches so near alike in doctrine and in polity that it would seem a shame that they should not be one in name. It does not mean abolition of denominations or of denominational loyalty, or that we should not be at liberty to choose our spiritual fellowship. It does not mean ecclesiastical uniformity. But it does mean unity of spirit, of purpose, of missionary and social effort, and of loyalty to the deity of Christ and the authority of the Scriptures. "The deepest meaning of Christian unity," says

some one, "is union with Christ, oneness with the Son of God, identification with Christ in spirit, purpose, and labor; and coming out of that, as a cause and an inspiration, union of Christians, genuine brotherly love and trust, a love that sees the Christian in the man and that sees Christ in the Christian."

"The Spirit, when he fills souls," says Dr. J. Stuart Holden, "welds them as by holy fire with all other Spirit-filled souls, and 'all one in Christ' becomes not a truism, but a blessedly experienced truth. This the world waits to see, and when it does, it will believe in Him whose name we bear."

True Christian unity, then, is spiritual—begotten of the Holy Spirit. And when hearts are fused by the fire of God's Spirit, then the church will present to the world a united front, even though there be diversity of views about church polity and diversity of names.

"Like a mighty army
Moves the church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod;
We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine,
One in charity."

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence."

SOME MEN OF FIRE

STANDING high on the mountain peaks of Christian history are a few men of fire whose single-heartedness and devotion and flaming zeal every Christian worker should study daily. These men not only turned the multitudes toward God but their influence was felt in all the higher realms of life. Savonarola, for instance, exerted a mighty influence on the art of his day. It was then that Botticelli really came to his own. He restored Christian ideals, and put new life into the great historical facts of religion. No history of art in the days of the Renaissance would be complete without mention of the Monk of Saint Mark's.

Foremost among these men of flame was

John the Baptist

He was the first herald of fire in the New Testament era. It was he to whom was in-

trusted the high honor of announcing Him who would "baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire." He came in "the spirit and power of Elijah," and the Master said of him that he was "much more than a prophet." He was "a sun with a halo, a prophet plus." The intensity of his spirit and his utter devotion to the work of the kingdom of God recall at once the Old Testament Elijah. The fiery Tishbite had appeared again, flaming against sin, and calling a corrupt age to repentance. His ministry was brief, but it burned with a quenchless zeal for righteousness.

Here was a man with sublime courage. He was no reed shaken with the wind. He was no Beau Brummell of the pulpit, clothed in soft raiment. "If the gaunt ascetic," says some one, speaking of John, "with his girdle of camel's hair and his coarse fare, had been a self-indulgent sybarite, his voice would never have shaken a nation."

John was no lecturer. He was a preacher—a herald—a man shouting "Repent! Repent!" Joseph Parker used to say that "the lecturer comes before you with his kid gloves and scented arrangements, and tells you how delighted he is to have the opportunity of speak-

ing to so large, enlightened, and influential an assemblage. The preacher stands up and says 'Repent!' And who likes to listen to a man whose voice is a charge and whose sentences are thunderbolts?" The age needs ten thousand men like the Baptist to cry "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

John's preaching drew the multitudes. There went out to him Jerusalem and all Judæa and all the region round about Jordan. Men wanted the message of fire, and men want it to-day. Many of us seem to be obsessed with the idea that they want something else. Some do, but the many want the message of the cross spoken with a tongue of fire. When Bishop Charles Bayard Mitchell came back from Europe, where he had gone to preach to our soldiers following the armistice in the World War, he said that by the failure of the Y. M. C. A. to organize effectively at the first the religious work department, the greatest opportunity in the history of the Christian Church to preach Christ to open-minded men had not been improved. The entertainment department of the Association was overdone, and some entertainment secretaries "seemed to think that the men only desired to be

amused, and had no taste for serious matters." Bishop Mitchell said that their assumption was an insult to the troops; and that when he had preached the gospel to the men in the huts he had seen them get up and walk out by hundreds rather than remain for the show that was put on afterward.

When heaven's message of salvation is preached by men of fire, and when the church in the community is known to be loyal to Christ, then the gospel is still the world's mightiest magnet, and the multitudes will flock to the preacher as they did to John. A dead church is the only thing that can neutralize the message of fire.

Paul the Apostle

Saint Paul will always stand in the supreme place among Christian preachers. He was an evangelist extraordinary. His words of fire have lighted all the Christian centuries. His superb intellect, his ceaseless energy, his heroic self-sacrifice, his utter consecration to one great purpose, and his burning messages, make him the peer of all men of fire. Only to read some of his wonderful prayers, like that uttered for the Ephesian Christians, is surely

to be convinced that his life flamed with holy fire.

There were three things in the life of the great apostle to the Gentiles that marked him preeminently as a man of fire:

1. *His boundless enthusiasm.* His enthusiasm has fanned the missionary spirit of the great reformers and missionaries through the Christian centuries. Was it not Proclus, the Athenian, who said that life can never be at its best until caught in the upward sweep of some great enthusiasm. From the day of his spiritual birth at Damascus, Paul's life was caught in the upward sweep of a holy enthusiasm for Jesus Christ. In the face of the greatest difficulties and discouragements he never faltered nor hesitated, but went steadily forward with his great work. His enthusiasm kept him out of the ruts. The rut is always fatal to enthusiasm.

2. *His adaptability.* No condition or circumstance hindered Paul from doing something that would count for Christ. Whether before a royal court or in a Philippian jail he would preach Christ. He said, "I am become all things to all men that I may by all means save some." He could adapt his message to

Roman soldiers, or to Grecian philosophers, or to Jewish rabbis, and plead for his Lord. He suited the message to the occasion; but he always made the message glorify Christ. Happy is that man who has the insight and wisdom to enter into sympathy with the people he tries to help, and who can say with George Fox: "I have prayed to be baptized with a sense of all conditions that I might be able to know the needs and feel the sorrows of all"; or, with Paul, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

3. *His high purpose.* Paul was always doing things, and the man who does things will be a target for sharp-tongued and uncharitable people. Paul was criticized—severely criticized—yet in the face of criticism he says, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This supreme life motive lifted him above the noise of the babbling tongues, and gave him soul-poise. To be God-possessed as was Paul is to be able to say with him, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. What higher purpose can control a human life? Such a life purpose given by the Holy Spirit

will make a flaming herald of any man. This it did for Zinzendorf, who said, "I have but one enthusiasm; it is He, only He." And so will it be with all who experience this wondrous baptism of fire.

Chrysostom the Golden-Mouthed

It is said that Chrysostom had a vision in which he saw the altar rails of Saint Sophia crowded with angels listening to the sermon. No wonder his words broke like thunder against the social scandals and loose living of the wicked city on the Bosphorus. No wonder the hatred of the emperor and empress was soon kindled against him, and that he was deposed and arrested. But the man who had seen God and angels listening did not fear. To his friends who gathered about him, embracing him, and kissing his garments, Chrysostom said:

"What can I fear? Will it be death? But you know that Christ is my life, and that I shall gain by death. Will it be exile? But the earth and all its fullness is the Lord's. Will it be the loss of wealth? But we brought nothing into the world, and can carry nothing out. Thus all the terrors of the world are

contemptible in my eyes; and I smile at all its good things. Poverty I do not fear. Riches I do not sigh for. Death I do not shrink from; and life I do not desire, save only for the progress of your souls. But you know, my friends, the true cause of my fall. It is that I have not lined my house with rich tapestry. It is that I have not clothed me in robes of silk. It is that I have not flattered the effeminacy and sensuality of certain men, nor laid gold and silver at their feet. But why need I say more? Jezebel is raising her persecution, and Elias must fly; Herodias is taking her pleasure, and John must be bound with chains; the Egyptian wife tells her lie, and Joseph must be thrust into prison. And so, if they banish me, I shall be like Elias; if they throw me in the mire, like Jeremiah; if they plunge me into the sea, like the prophet Jonah; if into the pit, like Daniel; if they stone me, it is Stephen that I shall resemble; John the forerunner, if they cut off my head; Paul, if they beat me with stripes; Isaiah, if they saw me asunder."

Chrysostom was preeminently a man of fire. The church of that early age had its metaphysicians and its expositors and its apolo-

gists and its teachers, but the Golden-Mouthed was a man of fire. For six years in his early manhood he dwelt in the desert with monks, while he prayed and meditated on the Scriptures. Sleeping on a bed of straw and denying himself all luxury, his nature was chastened and mellowed and his thought fired by the Holy Spirit in preparation for his great mission. There the fear of man was forever removed. There the glory of Christ became the absorbing passion of his life. After he had preached at Antioch for twelve years the emperor made him bishop against his will. But standing in Saint Sophia he was still the man of fire he had been at Antioch. The trappings and honors of ecclesiastical position never moved him from his high purpose to be the faithful ambassador of Jesus Christ. He lived in the day of luxury and extravagance in Roman life, but his voice thundered against these and against all the sins of the day.

Of course it was inevitable that the forces of evil should soon be arrayed against him, and that by imperial authority he should be tried and sent into exile. When the people insisted on his recall, he came back, but only to thunder against sin. Soon he was banished

a second time. They drove him into the desert, where, worn out with disease and hardship, he passed from earth to heaven.

Savonarola the Christian Statesman

Savonarola was the first great Protestant reformer, and martyrdom by the Roman Church was his reward. But his burning words have echoed down the centuries, and many a Christian knight has heard their call and gone forth to valiant service for the King. "Judged by the test," said Silvester Horne, "that a great sermon will make its hearers ready to fight and die for the faith, Savonarola was a supreme preacher." From his pulpit in the Duomo he thundered the vengeance of God until men fell in terror on the marble floor. Rebuking the hierarchy, he said, "In the primitive church the chalices were of wood, and the prelates of gold; in these days the church hath chalices of gold and prelates of wood." Beneath his dark, shaggy brows burned the fires of a great soul. Lorenzo tried to bribe him, the pope tried to silence him, but in vain.

Savonarola came upon the world's stage of action at a time of great stress and storm.

Both in church and state corruption was at high tide. Liberty was dead. The church was worse than dead and the people did not know it. It had become paganized. Men were being seated in the papal chair through bribes, and scandal and corruption were so common that little attention seems to have been paid to them. Human monsters like Innocent VIII and Alexander VI brought Christianity into contempt and derision. It was then that God raised up this prophet with a soul of flame. In early life the splendor and gaiety of the age had little attraction for him. He saw the wickedness and licentiousness of popes and kings and princes, and turned from it all to the convent. His first preaching in Florence was utterly unsuccessful. His lips had not yet been touched with the holy fire. He returned to San Marco and there meditated upon the Word and spent much time in prayer and fasting. Then the Spirit came upon him in a marvelous way. In the villages of Tuscany and the cities of Northern Italy he began to preach with mighty power, rebuking sin in high places and in low, and prophesying that the scourge of God would come upon the land unless the people turned from sin. Soon he

was in Florence again, and preaching with power. He wavered not to declare the whole counsel of God. His denunciation reached the ears of Borgia, who sat in the papal chair. He at once set about to destroy him. First he tried to bribe the preacher; then he threatened. Hatred at last triumphed, and Savonarola was tortured and hung, his body burned, and his ashes scattered on the sea; but his burning words have influenced the world to this day.

Luther the Reformer

The Reformation was a revival of heart religion. Its great leader made one mistake. Had he as mightily opposed the oppression of the peasantry by heartless landlords as he opposed the superstitions of Rome, the Reformation would have had a much wider and much more permanent influence. Yet it must be said that Martin Luther was one of the greatest religious reformers of the Christian centuries.

He sought salvation from sin in the usual Roman Catholic ways. He fasted and prayed and tortured his body, and sought the seclusion of the monastery. But at last he found

deliverance by faith in Christ. Then the Spirit of God filled his life, and with flaming soul he proclaimed the great truth of justification by faith, and took his stand for the supreme authority of the Scriptures.

Who but a man of fire would dare to speak out against the abominations of the church, in which he had been reared and educated, in words like these?—

"O ye blind leaders of the blind! O ye legal and technical men, obscuring the light of truth! O ye miserable Pharisees, ye bigots, ye selfish priests, tenacious of your power, your inventions, your traditions, will ye withhold the free redemption, God's greatest boon, salvation by the blood of Christ, offered to all the world? Yea, will you suffer the people to perish, soul and body, because you fear that, instructed by God himself, they will rebel against your accursed despotism? Have you considered what a mighty crime you thus commit against God, against man? Ye rule by an infernal appeal to the superstitious fears of men, but how shall ye yourselves, for such crimes, escape the damnation of that hell into which you would push your victims unless they obey you?"

And we need to-day men of fire like Luther who will have the courage to speak out against a growing ecclesiasticism in some of our churches; against the worldliness and selfishness, the indifference and neglect of many who profess to be Christians; against the growing disrespect for law and for parental authority, among young people; against the heartlessness and cruelty of some big corporations; and against the spirit of anarchy prevalent in some labor organizations. Surely, only men of large vision and wide sympathies and unselfish spirit can be used by the Holy Spirit for spiritual and moral leadership in this new day.

Wesley the Evangelist

In a little Moravian meetinghouse in London while John Wesley listened to the reading of Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans he felt his "heart strangely warmed." Speaking of that supreme moment in his life, he said: "I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for

those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart."

From that hour he had a calmness and confidence and peace which made him master of circumstances and conditions. A flame of holy zeal swept him out of the conventions and formalities of the Established Church. And when the doors of the churches were closed against him his zeal sent him out into the fields and streets to preach Christ, and even to stand on his father's grave and speak to the multitudes of the great salvation. Traveling constantly, generally on horseback, preaching two or three times every day, forming societies, building chapels, raising funds for schools, writing books, but above all preaching Christ wherever opportunity afforded, he was undoubtedly the greatest evangelist since Saint Paul.

Wesley's emphasis on two things in evangelism gave permanency to his work:

1. *His emphasis upon the witness of the Spirit.* Wesley never got away from that experience in the Moravian chapel. There the Holy Spirit had warmed his heart and he

knew he was saved. He believed that this witness is for every believer in Jesus Christ. He insisted that his converts should possess it. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." When the soul looks to Jesus Christ by faith, the Holy Spirit causes "faith to rise into assurance," the assurance of sonship—that divine inward consciousness of freedom from condemnation. Wesley defined it thus: "An inward impression on the soul whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God." We need a new emphasis upon this precious teaching of the New Testament to-day.

2. *His care for the spiritual growth of his converts.* They were organized into classes under competent leaders, who met with them once a week and inquired concerning their spiritual progress. The leaders advised, encouraged, and directed these converts. In these days the class meeting has declined among the followers of Wesley. To be sure, it was abused, as nearly all good things are sooner or later, but pastors would do well to study and apply the practical side of the plan to the care of converts to-day.

The time is ripe for the coming of a great host of mighty men of fire, true successors of these immortal spirits. The age is pregnant with great problems of world interest that must be solved if civilization would be saved from utter collapse. The destinies of future generations are in the balances. Nations that forgot God are tumbling into oblivion, and other nations are born in a day. World history is moving with the swiftness of light. Who will be equal to a time like this? Who will save the world from chaos? Who but the Eternal Christ of Calvary and the Resurrection morning? If we can have a host of men and women with flaming lives, and tongues of fire, to proclaim the power of his atoning blood, and the glory of his coming kingdom, then righteousness and peace shall yet cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

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